

Message Text

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FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY'S PARTY--TOM RESTON FROM S/PRS:TRATTNER

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFINGS, JULY 26 AND 27

1. SHORT BRIEFING MONDAY, JULY 25, CONTAINED NOTHING OF INTEREST FOR YOU.
2. HIGHLIGHTS OF JULY 26 BRIEFING WERE STATEMENT OF USG DISAPPOINTMENT AT ISRAELI ACTION TO GIVE LEGAL STATUS TO THREE WEST BANK SETTLEMENTS; AND RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ON MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO SOMALIA.
3. ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS: RESPONDING TO QUESTIONS, SPOKESMAN SAID WE HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH ISRAELI GOVERNMENT ABOUT REPORTS GOI HAD ACTED ON SETTLEMENTS, AND HAD BEEN INFORMED BY GOI THAT IT IS TAKING ACTION TO GIVE LEGAL STATUS TO THREE EXISTING SETTLEMENTS ON WEST BANK. IT IS OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT FORMER ISRAELI GOVERNMENT HAD REFUSED TO LEGALIZE AT LEAST ONE OF THESE SETTLEMENTS. WE

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HAVE CONSISTENTLY MADE CLEAR, INCLUDING IN OUR RECENT TALKS IN WASHINGTON, OUR VIEW THAT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SETTLEMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES IS NOT ONLY CONTRARY TO FOURTH GENEVA CONVENTION BUT ALSO CONSTITUTES AN OBSTACLE TO PROGRESS IN THE PEACEMAKING PROCESS. WE ARE DEEPLY DISAPPOINTED BY THIS DEVELOPMENT.

AFTER BRIEFING, WE RESPONDED TO FOLLOWING TAKEN QUESTIONS:
DOES LEGALIZING SETTLEMENTS MEAN THAT GOI IS SAYING THEY
ARE PART OF ISRAEL, DOES IT GIVE PROPERTY TITLE, OR WHAT?
ANSWER: FOR THESE DETAILS, YOU SHOULD ASK GOI. IN
GENERAL, OUR UNDERSTANDING IS THAT THESE SETTLEMENTS ARE
NOW AUTHORIZED, EX POST FACTO, BY GOI.

DID THIS REPORT ON SETTLEMENTS TAKE US BY SURPRISE, DID
BEGIN WARN US IN HIS MEETINGS HERE, OR WAS THERE AN
UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN BEGIN AND USG? ANSWER: THE USG
HAD NO ADVANCE NOTICE OF THESE STEPS BY THE ISRAELI
GOVERNMENT. WE CANNOT GO INTO DETAILS OF PRESIDENT'S
TALKS WITH BEGIN, BEYOND REPEATING THAT BOTH LEADERS TOLD
ONE ANOTHER THEIR POSITIONS ON SETTLEMENTS IN THE OCCUPIED
TERRITORY.

WHAT DOES FOURTH GENEVA CONVENTION DEAL WITH, ESPECIALLY
ARTICLE 49? ANSWER: WE ARE SPEAKING OF ARTICLE 49 OF THE
FOURTH GENEVA CONVENTION RELATIVE TO THE PROTECTION OF
CIVILIAN PERSONS IN TIME OF WAR OF AUGUST 12, 1949.
ARTICLE 49 SPEAKS DIRECTLY TO THE ISSUE OF POPULATION
TRANSFER: QUOTE. THE OCCUPYING POWER SHALL NOT DEPORT OR
TRANSFER PARTS OF ITS OWN CIVILIAN POPULATION INTO THE
TERRITORY IT OCCUPIES. END QUOTE.

4. SOMALIA: IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS WHETHER SOMALIS HAVE
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ASKED FOR U.S. MILITARY ASSISTANCE AND WHETHER U.S. WILL
GIVE ANY, SPOKESMAN SAID WE HAVE BEEN APPROACHED BY SOMALI
GOVERNMENT, AS HAVE SEVERAL OTHER FRIENDS AND ALLIES OF
OURS, ON QUESTION OF ARMS SUPPLIES. WE HAVE INDICATED
WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO IN PRINCIPLE TO PROVIDE ARMS IN
COOPERATION WITH OTHER NATIONS WITH WHICH SOMALIS HAVE
BEEN IN CONTACT. WE WOULD, OF COURSE, CONFINE ANY DEFENSE
ARTICLES WE MIGHT PROVIDE TO ITEMS DESIGNED TO FILL ANY
GAPS THAT MIGHT EXIST IN THE DEFENSIVE STRUCTURE FOR
SOMALIA'S PRESENT TERRITORY. ON QUESTION OF TERRITORY
DISPUTED IN SOMALI-ETHIOPIAN FIGHTING, HE SAID WE CON-
SISTENTLY SUPPORTED AND CONTINUE TO SUPPORT OAU PRINCIPLE
OF TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF MEMBER STATES; THIS IS A
MATTER OAU WILL HAVE TO WRESTLE WITH.

5. ONLY ITEM OF INTEREST TO YOU IN JULY 27 BRIEFING WAS
QUESTION ON REPORT (IN NYTIMES) THAT ADMINISTRATION IS
PROPOSING TO SELL EGYPT 200 MILLION DOLLARS IN MILITARY
RECONAISSANCE AND TRANSPORT PLANES. SPOKESMAN REPLIED THAT
THIS MATTER IS CURRENTLY BEING DISCUSSED WITH MEMBERS OF
CONGRESS--THE MATTER BEING ADMINISTRATION DESIRE TO PROVIDE
MORE C-130S AND NON-LETHAL EQUIPMENT TO EGYPT. UNTIL FORM-

AL NOTIFICATION IS MADE TO CONGRESS, THESE DISCUSSIONS ARE
CONFIDENTIAL AND WE PREFER TO WITHHOLD DETAILS UNTIL THEY
ARE CONCLUDED. WE WOULD NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT PRESIDENT
SADAT HAS ENDED HIS DEPENDENCE ON SOVIET UNION AND HAS
EXPRESSED HIS DESIRE TO DIVERSIFY EGYPTIAN ARMS SUPPLIES.
WE BELIEVE IT IS CLEARLY IN OUR INTEREST TO ASSIST HIM
WHERE POSSIBLE. VANCE

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